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Pattern of conferences

Letter dated 12 November 2002 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 7 November 2002 from the Chairman of the Sixth Committee (see annex).

(*Signed*) Jan **Kavan**

02-68953 (E) 121102

Annex

Letter dated 7 November 2002 from the Chairman of the Sixth Committee addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit through your office, the attached letter addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) Arpad **Prandler**
Chairman of the Sixth Committee of the
fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly

Enclosure

Letter dated 7 November 2002 from the Chairman of the Sixth Committee addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

I refer to my letter dated 18 October 2002 (A/C.5/57/18) addressed to you regarding the report of the Committee on Conferences for 2002, document A/57/32, and, in particular, its paragraph 79, wherein it is noted that the programmatic and financial consequences of the integration of the functions of the Fifth and Sixth Committee technical-servicing secretariats would be considered by the appropriate bodies of the General Assembly.

You will recall that I had indicated in that letter that the Sixth Committee had requested the Secretariat to provide it with information as to the implications of the proposed integration. I had also requested the Fifth Committee to postpone any decision on that matter, which appears under agenda item 116, until such time as the Sixth Committee has received the appropriate information from the Secretariat and has had the opportunity to consider it.

Upon my written invitation, the Under-Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management appeared before the Sixth Committee at its 25th meeting, on 5 November 2002, in order to provide such information.

Delegations expressed their appreciation for the presence of the representatives of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. While supportive of the Secretary-General's overall reform efforts, members of the Committee and the Chairman of the International Law Commission raised a number of detailed questions about the implications of the transfer of the technical-servicing secretariat of the Sixth Committee to that Department from the Office of Legal Affairs, including the implications for various technical and specialized bodies of the Sixth Committee as well as for those bodies whose reports are considered by the Sixth Committee, and requested an explanation of the benefits of such a transfer. The questions raised and comments made by members of the Committee and the Chairman of the International Law Commission reflect concerns as to whether such a transfer was at all necessary. Concerns were expressed that such a transfer could lead to diminishing quality of services to the Sixth Committee and its related bodies in their discharge of the Charter mandate in the progressive development of international law and its codification (Article 13 (1) (a)). A number of delegations raised questions as to whether the intended transfer would lead to any cost-saving measures for the Organization or whether it could rather involve additional costs (A/C.6/57/SR.25).

The Sixth Committee therefore requests that the Fifth Committee, in considering the issue in the context of agenda item 116, take into account the serious concerns expressed in the Sixth Committee with regard to this matter.

I am forwarding this letter to you with the concurrence of the Sixth Committee.

(*Signed*) Arpad **Prandler**
Chairman of the Sixth Committee of the
fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly